NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

At RNC, Dolan prays for freedom, just government

Brian Roewe | Aug. 31, 2012 NCR Today

New York archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan delivered the benediction Thursday night at the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Fla., minutes after former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney accepted the party's nomination for president of the United States.

Appearing on stage beside only Speaker of the House Rep. John Boehner, and after hundreds of red, white and blue balloons fell from the ceiling of the Tampa Bay Times Forum, Dolan began his prayer by asking for God's "continued blessings on this sanctuary of freedom, and on all of those who proudly call America home" and "upon those yet to be born and on those who are about to see you at the end of this life."

The archbishop continued, asking God's guidance for Romney, vice-president candidate Rep. Paul Ryan, those in and seeking public office to "remember that the only just government is the government that serves its citizens instead of itself."

The prayer, lasting just over four minutes, was much anticipated by Catholics and other observers, eager to hear what Dolan would say and if his words would suggest any partisan leaning.

Much debate followed the archbishop's acceptance [1] Aug. 23 of the GOP's invitation to pray with their delegates in Tampa, with many questioning whether Dolan, the president of the U.S. bishops' conference, by his presence would signal support of one party over another.

Some of the uproar subsided Tuesday when it was announced Dolan would also lead the final benediction of the Democratic National Convention [2] in Charlotte, N.C.

In his benediction, broadcasted live by only a few networks, Dolan focused a significant portion of his prayer on freedom, saying, "Almighty God, who gives us the sacred and inalienable gift of life, we thank you as well for the singular gift of liberty.

"Renew in all of our people a respect for religious freedom in full, that first most cherished freedom. Make us truly free by tethering freedom to truth and ordering freedom to goodness.

Help us live our freedom in faith, hope and love, prudently and with justice, courageously and in a spirit of moderation, and kindle in our hearts a new sense of responsibility for freedom?s cause and make us ever grateful for all those for who for more than two centuries have given their lives in freedom?s defense."

Below is Dolan's benediction in full:

> Almighty God, father of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus, we beg your continued blessings on this sanctuary of freedom, and on all those who proudly call America home. We ask your benediction upon those yet to be born, and on those who are about to see you at the end of this life. Bless those families whose ancestors arrived on these shores generations ago, as well as those families that have come recently, to build a better future, while weaving their lives into the rich tapestry of America.

We lift up to your loving care those afflicted by the recent storms and drought and fire. We ask for the grace to stand in solidarity with all those who suffered. May we strive to include your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breath free in the production and prosperity of a people so richly blessed.

Oh God of wisdom, justice, and might, we ask your guidance for those who govern us, and on those who would govern us: the president, vice-president, the Congress, the Supreme Court, and on all those who seek to serve the common good by seeking public office, especially Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan. Make them all worthy to serve you by serving our country. Help them remember that the only just government is the government that serves its citizens rather than itself.

Almighty God, who gives us the sacred and inalienable gift of life, we thank you as well for the singular gift of liberty. Renew in all of our people a respect for religious freedom in full, that first, most cherished freedom. Make us truly free by tethering freedom to truth and ordering freedom to goodness. Help us live our freedom in faith, hope and love, prudently and with justice, courageously and in a spirit of moderation, and kindle in our hearts a new sense of responsibility for freedom?s cause and make us ever grateful for all those for who for more than two centuries have given their lives in freedom?s defense. We commend their noble souls to your eternal care as even now we beg your mighty hand upon our beloved men and women in uniform.

May we know the truth of your creation, respecting the laws of nature and nature?s God, and not seek to replace it with idols of our own making. Give us the good sense not to cast aside the boundaries of righteous living you first inscribed on our hearts even before inscribing them on tablets of stone. May you mend our every flaw, confirming our soul in self-control, our liberty in law.

We pray for all those who seek honest labor, as we thank you for the sprit of generosity to those in need with which you so richly bless this nation. We beseech your blessing on all who depart from here this evening, and on all those in every land who seek to conduct their lives in freedom.

Most of all almighty God, we thank you for the great gift of our beloved country, for we are indeed one nation under God and in God we trust. Dear God, bless America, you who live and reign forever and ever.

Amen.

Source URL (retrieved on *09/04/2015 - 12:09*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/rnc-dolan-prays-freedom-just-government?splash=

Links:
[1] http://ncronline.org/news/politics/editorial-dolan-playing-dangerous-game
[2] http://ncronline.org/news/politics/cardinal-dolan-pray-close-both-parties-conventions